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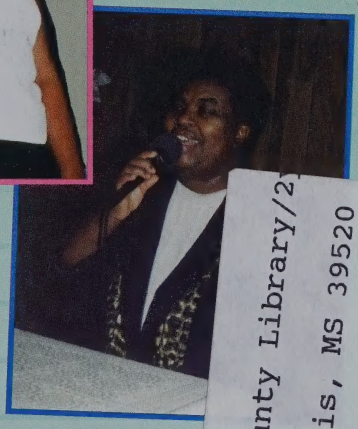

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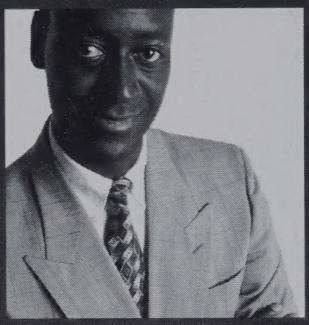

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VOL.2 NO. 9 MAY 1998

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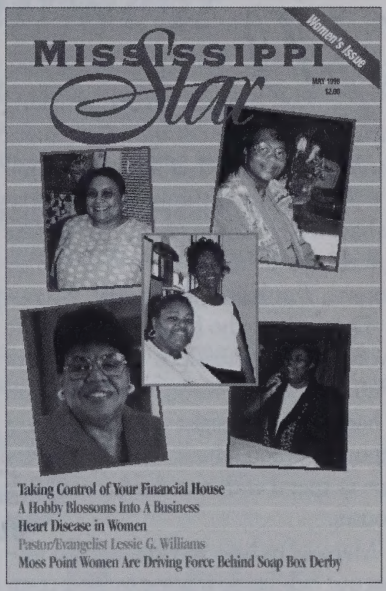
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PUBLISHER'S PAGE

Vonretta Singleton

Women have come a long way in terms of our contributions to our communities, churches and on the job as well. Don't you think? I realize that we have a long way to go, but sometimes it feels good to observe and enjoy progress, if only for a moment.

Those of us who have careers and are involved in organizations that take a lot of time outside of work, sometimes find it hard to keep sight of what's most important, and that's finding quality time to spend with our children and our spouses.

Many of us have to work to help support our families so that we can live comfortably. But is it worth it to them to see us stressed out or overwhelmed with all that we have taken on? Yet, these other activities we are involved in are important to our communities.

It seems that it would be simple to choose what the right thing to do is, but it's not quite as simple as that. Black women, in particular have had to be stronger for our children because disproportionate numbers of us have been left to raise our children alone. But even in the toughest of times and situations, we seem to find the strength to make it.

In the business world women appear to be making considerable progress. Locally, from what I have observed in the media and the people I have come in contact with, the same appears to hold true. What an inspiring experience it was to be in the company of the more than one hundred women who attended the first planning session for the African-American Women's Conference scheduled to be held in Biloxi in August 1999. And what a coup that was for the City of Biloxi to follow the City of Chicago in hosting this event.

Women representing various skills, professions and work experiences volunteered to work on committees to make this national conference a success. This was indeed an enlightening, empowering and encouraging experience. And what an opportunity this event is going to be for the Mississippi Gulf Coast. I hope that all of you plan to attend.

As we approach the year 2000 and beyond, it apppears that job and career opportunities will continue to show growth in South Mississippi. That

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means that there will be more opportunities for advancement for women and the realization of more dreams fulfilled.

If you have a career dream, now is the time to be preparing yourself. Go after your dreams no matter how tough it is to make your dreams come true. You've got to believe in yourself. Don't go to work carrying a chip on your shoulders as if the world owes you something. That is destructive to you and the work environment. Be part of the solution. Work hard and make your work unit productive.

If you go into a company thinking that you will be treated differently because you are black, then you have already taken yourself out of the game. And I say game because life is much like a game of chess. Every time you make a move you've got to think about the consequence of that move. Well work is the same way. You have always got to think before you say or do anything.

Support one another. Don't join in on gossip. People who thrive on gossip usually are trying to beat somebody from talking about them. Become part of the solution instead of being a part of the problem. Believe me, a person who presents themself as a friend and finds enjoyment from telling someone something that will upset them is not a friend.

In closing, I'd like to take this opportunity to encourage women to go after your dreams! Quitting should never be an option! And while you're making your way to the top, share your knowledge and experiences with our children.

Vonretta Singleton is branch manager of Hancock Bank Edgewater.

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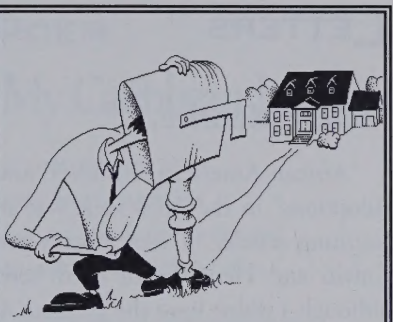

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Letters to the Publisher

should be 100 words or less.
Star Calendar: Events of interest to South Mississippians should be submitted on your organization's letterhead, specifying the date, time, place of event and a number of contact. Submissions should be received by the twentieth day of the preceding month.
Be sure to include a daytime telephone number.

Mail submissions to
Mississippi Star, P.O. Box 2651, Bay St. Louis, MS 39521.

Mississippi Star reserves the right to refuse or decline to publish any submission.

LETTERS

Dear Maurice,

"African-American Families and Adoptions" in the April issue was an inspiring article. I remember when Calvin and Herta Smith lived here, although I didn't have the pleasure of knowing them. What they've done with their lives and for other people is remarkable and makes me want to think of a way to do something similar. We all get comfortable with what we have and with our lives as they are and forget about others in need. Thanks for the article. Although I usually can't wait to read what you write on the Publisher's Page, I have to admit that I enjoyed your Guest Editors, Vonretta and Glenda, a lot.

Thanks,
Jeannie Deen
Bay St. Louis

We want to hear from you!

Write to us to give us your input on the issues we discuss here in The Mississippi Star. Letters should be 100 words or less. Send them to:

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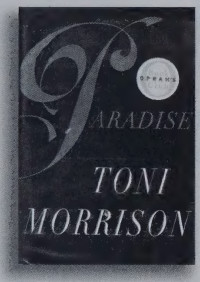
Books

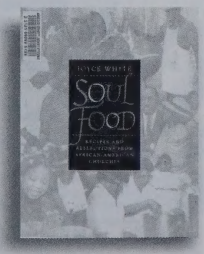
Paradise

(Published by Alfred A. Knoff, Inc., 1997) by award-winning author Toni Morrison is a captivating mystery. Morrison's inviting style places readers in very close proximity to the story. Sometimes it's a place or an event such as a church service or a wedding; sometimes it's a thought in a character's mind. Paradise is fun reading and recommended by Oprah's Book Club. Paradise is a can't put down



Soul Food

(Haper Collins Publishers 1998) is a cookbook with a serious personality. Joyce White has collected recipes and stories from African-American churches. Pumpkin bread, Gulf Coast gumbo, Southern fried chicken, seet potato fries, angel biscuits and sweet potato biscuits are only some of the popular dishes that line the tables of the after-church gatherings. The author is a contributing food editor for Heart & Soul magazine.



Poem

My Caribbean Lullaby

Her words waft on the breeze
evoking limpid, emerald Seas.
Gentle and wild, the limerick they swell
Soca and Punts and pople they tell.

She tells of swain and ladies, gallant nd fair
who clandestinely rendezvous nearby the pier.
Ardent embrace, who sees, who cares?
Night sea remembers, but only moon stares.

Seawal for bed, lapping waves song
fueling tropical passion the whole night long.
Breakers rise and fall, love's music enflame
spurious promise banish false shame.

A single-eyed sky spies near the night-clothed sea
remember, and remembering trysts so free.
She sings the songs of long, long ago
changing me, lifing me, loving me so.

Her music beats in my heart long past the song's hush
enlivening my soul to endeavor not blush.
The sea, the moon, the sun and the rain
people her story and flow in my veins.

Ruth W. Johnson

My sister, brother and I were suckled on Belizean lore all our lives. Its influence exerts itself in my writing as well as in my cultural orientation. We've traveled extensively, but I love the fecund flora, unique fauna and melifluous denizen that are Belize. Mama was a wonderful storyteller. She was gifted with a rich heritage which has blessed our lives.

As a girl, people often asked me, "Uhmm, Ruthann Why yo' Mama talk so funny?"

I didn't understand, because Mama talked just fine to me. Her speech was full of music, but I heard no accent. Yet, I was chagrined by the inference that I was 'different.'

Today, I'm so proud of the heritage Mama added to the recipe that is uniquely and remarkably me.

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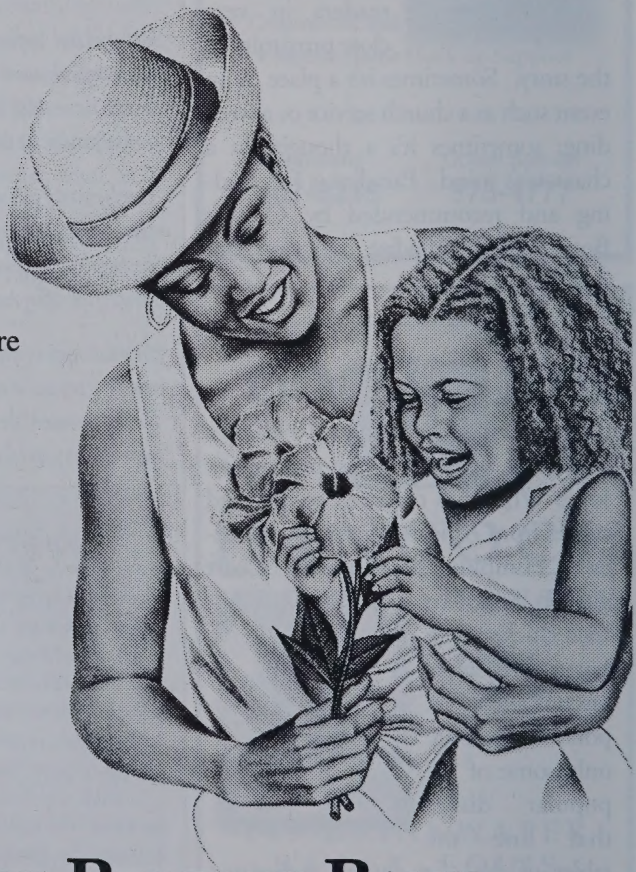

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EQUAL HOUSING LENDER

WOMEN INVESTORS: *Taking Control of Your Financial House*

by Bridget Weatherly

Once upon a time, only men wore the "financial pants" in the family. As we look to the next century, however, more and more women are finding themselves in charge of their financial futures. Wheter it be through the death of a spouse, divorce or loss of a job, women are serving as the heads of their households more than ever before.

According to a recent Oppenheimer Funds survey, between 80% and 90% of all women believe they will be solely responsible for their financial well-being at some point in time. Chances are, they will. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Census reports that women live an average of seven years longer than men; the average age for widowhood is 57; and the number of female-headed families has jumped more than 37% since 1980.

The challenge of planning a secure, financial future is particularly difficult for women. Women live longer and can expect to be retired approximately 25% longer than men. Also, various research suggests that on average, single women will have less than one-third of the annual income they need for a comfortable retirement, in large part because women save only 1.5% of their current income. Women also tend to have a more conservative approach to nvesting and invest in less than half as much in stocks as men.

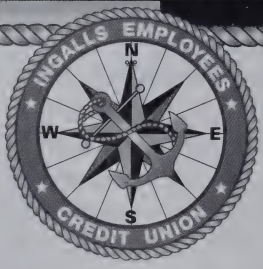
To prepare for a comfortable financial future, women need to save more of what they earn, begin saving earlier and they need to make that money grow. Here are some suggestions for women investors interested in taking control of their "financial house":

- **Educate Yourself.** The smart investor is the educated investor. The easiest and most inexpensive way is to read. There are numerous financial publications like the Wall Street Journal or Kiplinger's Magazine that cover the gamut of investment topics. Also, take time to attend investment seminars; the more you know about

investing, the easier your investment decisions will be.

- **Determine your financial goals and resources.** Before you can create an investment plan, you need to have a clear picture of your financial standing. You can begin this process by drawing up a budget with a detailed listing of your income, assets, savings, expenses and long-term debt. After assessing your current situation, a financial goal will help put your investment plan in perspective. What are you looking to achieve: Creating a comfortable retirement? Adding to your current income? Helping with your family's intermediate costs? Creating a reserve fund?
- **Create a systematic investment plan.** The sooner you can implement an investment plan, the faster your money can start to work for you. Once you have established a systematic plan, stick to it. Make your investments a priority. Consider it another monthly bill you have to pay. You should also periodically review your investments' progress and make sure they still match your investment objectives. Paying yourself first can bene-fit you later in life.

Too many times, women are first confronted with financial decisions during a crisis: divorce, illness or death of a spouse. By recognizing the importance of taking control of your financial future and learning how to do so, you can avoid confronting tough financial realities during an emotional time in our life.



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Special Women's Health Feature

HEART DISEASE IN WOMEN

by Dr. Maria M. Moman, M.D.

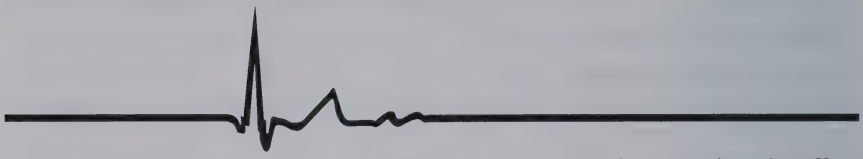
Coronary Heart Disease in women? In spite of the fact that the incidence of coronary heart disease is lower in women than in men of all ages, more women than men die from this disease. Coronary heart disease is the leading cause of death in women. This disease claims more lives than all other cancers combined, including breast cancer.

This disease is preventable. Women should familiarize themselves with these differences in gender which the medical community may not have given that much attention:

1) Women are more likely than men to have chest pain as the first symptom of heart disease. Chest pain should never be thought of as something that occurs with age, but should be properly evaluated and treated by your physician.

2) If you are a post-menopausal woman or have any risk factors for heart disease and begin to experience a sharp or steady pain or pressure in your chest, possibly radiating to your neck or arms or if you have shortness of breath in association with dizziness, sweating or nausea then seek immediate medical attention.

3) Heart disease is generally diagnosed at a later stage in women and is more serious. When women are found to have serious coronary artery disease, fewer of them are referred for angioplasty and coronary artery



bypass surgery, common procedures for relieving chest pain and restoring blood flow to the heart.

Cardiovascular disease is a term that can describe many problems of the heart and the circulatory system. Very important for women is atherosclerosis, a thickening and hardening of the arteries caused by buildup of fatty substances, cholesterol, calcium, cellular waste products and blood clots on the walls of the arteries. These buildups are known as plaque. For reasons that are not fully understood, the arteries that supply blood to the heart muscle called coronary arteries are particularly vulnerable to plaque formation which results in reduced blood flow to the heart muscle.

There has been a large number of population studies that have demonstrated a 50% decreased risk of heart disease associated with post menopausal estrogen use. Estrogen improves blood flow though the arteries and also stabilizes blood flow. It seems to prevent many of the early steps in the making of plaque within the arteries and does not lose its beneficial effects on heart disease when combined with progesterone. Estrogen which in the past was thought to contribute to the development of heart disease is now known to protect the heart.

Hormone therapy doesn't affect blood pressure. Women who take hormones have lower levels of the coagulant fibrinogen. Since increased fibrinogen is a risk factor for heart attacks and strokes the decreased level in women taking hormones suggest that hormone therapy protects against heart disease in a variety of ways.

You can make some key changes in your lifestyle and reduce your risk of developing heart disease, by practicing these preventive measures:

(1)Stop smoking.

(2)Control high blood pressure.

(3)Exercise regularly.

(4)Watch your weight and use dietary supplements.

(5)Drink alcohol in moderation.

(6)And last but not least, consider using estrogen.

Dr. Maria M. Moman, M.D. practices Obstetrics and Gynecology in Gulfport and is a staff physician at Memorial Hospital of Gulfport and Columbia Garden Park Hospital.

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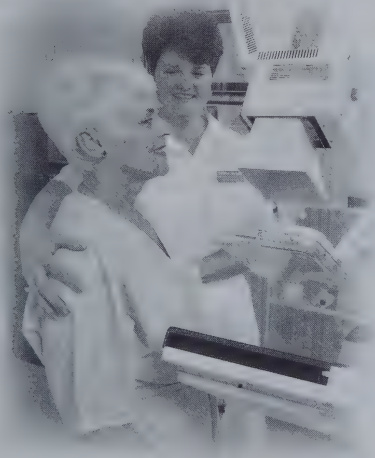

Who is at risk?
Women in the following categories:
- Over 40 years of age
- A personal or family history of breast cancer
- Early onset of menstruation
- Late age of menopause
- Never had children (or late at first live birth)

What do I look for?
Breast changes that persist, such as a lump, thickening, swelling, dimpling, skin irritation, distortion, retraction, scaliness, pain or tenderness of the nipple are warning signals for breast cancer. If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, contact your physician immediately.

What should I do?
Perform monthly self-examinations, and make sure your doctor gives you a breast examination once a year. Mammography can detect breast cancer up to two years before you or your doctor can feel a lump. So, once you turn 40, have a mammogram every year.

For more information or a physician referral call:
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A Hobby Blossoms Into A Business

by Maurice E. Singleton, Jr.

When Ollie Oliver opened the doors to the public to the newly-contructed shop that houses Designer Touch Florist and Wedding Consultants just over three months ago, a hobby had blossomed into a business.

"This is something that I've always enjoyed doing," said Ollie. "I've worked with flower arrangements, beautifying churches and proms since high school. I continued doing it in college. This has been more or less like a hobby I've turned into a business.

"It wasn't just an overnight thing," explained the former teacher who retired two years ago after spending twenty-five years in the classroom. She says that she had thought about starting her business considerably over the past seven or eight years, and over the past two years she actively planned the business.

And so far, the plan appears to be a good one. "I really haven't done much advertising, but word of mouth has the business going forward," she explained. "So far it has been successful. The thing that has pleased me the most is that when I followup on my work, the customer has been satisfied."

Ollie realized that although an enjoyable hobby may be a potentially good foundation for starting a business, she was not going to allow her business to rely solely on the experience she gained over the years by putting together floral arrangements at local church functions. During the past two years, she enrolled in community education classes, studying beginning and advanced flower arranging.

"It has really been exciting, especially putting it (the business) together," said Ollie.

"And being in this business is more to me than just from a financial standpoint," she explained. "It is the love for

helping people. My whole motive is to help somebody else. And that's how I arrived at my logo: The little shop with the big heart."

Designer Touch Florist and Wedding Consultants may be a little shop, but it is very capable of handling sizable projects. In fact, the first order for the business involved quite an event - the Gulfside Assembly 75th Anniversary Program. Ollie provided flowers for approximately 50 tables and a dozen roses for the occasion.

Ollie said that this type of event was not intimidating to her because she had organized projects of this magnitude prior to opening her business. "I had been doing my pastor's anniversary at the Baptist Community Center in Gulfport, and I have done a lot of church activities, and these events have involved sizable projects."

She has been contracted to provide floral decorations at First Missionary Bapist Church in Pass Christian. Rev. William Dee Young, pastor of First Missionary Baptist has provided support with announcements and referals.

Being A Role Model

"I believe that you have to present yourself as a role model," explained Ollie. "I really do. Your success helps them (young people) to be successful.

"My son right now is observing what I'm doing and he has expressed a desire to be a business owner one day," she proudly points out. "He is planning to pursue a business degree."

One of the benefits of having taught school for twenty-five years is that you come in contact with hundreds and hundreds of people - in some cases many more - students, parents and teachers. Consequently, her impact and example extends to many more people than those in her immediate family.

"I talk to some of my former students who are aware of the business. They are very pleased that I have transitioned from teaching and retiring to starting my own business.

"I have also talked to the youth of my church about succeeding in life. I found a lot of students who had poor self-esteem about what they were going to achieve in life."

Ollie says that she encourages them to go after their dreams, to plan strategies for success and then work hard toward making their dreams realities. "I often use the expression that Rip Daniels (South Mississippi radio personality) always uses to close his show: 'If you don't know where you're going, any road will take you there.'"

Once again, the commitment Ollie has for others is quite apparent. "It's a business," she points out. "But at the same time, if I can help somebody, that's what I will do."

Ollie Oliver is a native of Yazoo City, Mississippi and a graduate of Jackson State University. She is active in church and community activities, and she is presently the director of the after-school program at Gulfside Assembly in Waveland. Designer Touch Florist and Wedding Consultants is located at 922 Sears Avenue in Waveland, MS. Telephone number: 228/463-1231.

Her Mission is 'THE MESSAGE'

Evangelist Lessie G. Williams is the pastor of New Horizon Community Mission Church in Gulfport. A native of North Carolina, Pastor/Evangelist Williams has spent the past four years in Mississippi, ministering and pastoring in Greenwood, Jackson and Gulfport. It appears that fate has her on the Mississipp Gulf Coast.

"I am following the will of the Lord," said Williams. "I'd rather be here right now than anywhere else because I feel this is my assignment. I want to be where the Lord is directing me. I feel that at this time this is where God wants me. I'd rather be here than anywhere else in the world."

Williams said that a only a month passed between her past and current pastoria assignments. "I asked, 'Lord, if you want me to stay here, then give me a building. And he gave me this building," she explained.

New Horizon Community Mission Church has approximately fifteen regular members from four or five families that Williams says she "can depend on."

"I'm not concentrating on growth at this particular time," she pointed out. "I am concentrating more on getting the people here more established scripturally and spiritually. And once that is established we can concentrate more on church growth.

"I view this ministry more as a learning center, learnng more about God's kingdom which is a righteous kingdom. God has a statute of righteousness that people have to measure up to rather than

ESSIE G. WILLIAMS

striving to establish our own standards of righteousness."

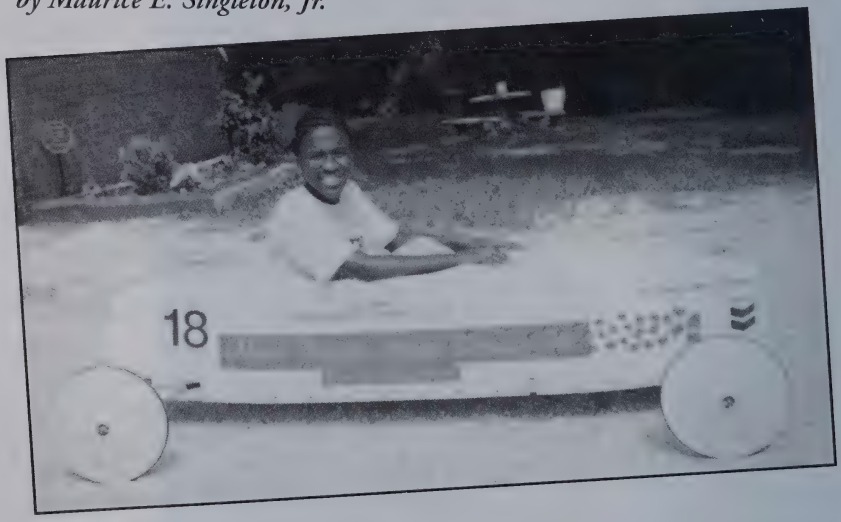
Williams has recorded two album-cassettes. The first, *Jesus is Mine,* was recorded 1984 and the latest, *I Made It Over,* was recorded in 1992. Both albums contain ginal material and were divinely inspired says Williams.

"I don't know that my music will make it to the big market, but my concern is the ssage, and I want that message to get to the people. Time is of the essence. There no time to drag. Every opportunity I have to get the message across, that's what I l do."

In addition to regular church services, Pastor/Evangelist Williams hosts a weekly dio program on Saturdays at noon on WQFX based in Biloxi. New Horizon mmunity Mission is a non-denominational church located at 1519 44th Avenue Gulfport.

Moss Point Women Are Driving Force Behind Magnolia State Soap Box Derby

by Maurice E. Singleton, Jr.



1998 Magnolia State Soap Box Derby Champion, Danielle Deshields

On Saturday, June 13, approximately thirty-five to forty boys and girls will conclude several months of preparation as they guide their racers down Main Street in the 7th Magnolia State Soap Box Derby in Moss Point, Mississippi.

The annual race involves boys and girls, ages 9 - 16, competing in what amounts to be a downhill four-wheeled glider constructed from a kit. The racers usually reach speeds of approximately fifteen miles an hour. The winner receives an all-expense paid trip to Akron, Ohio to compete in the American Soap Box Derby Race.

The children of Moss Point and surrounding areas are fortunate for the vision of Deborah Washington who

while scanning the television channels one night in 1990 came across the broadcast of the Soap Box Derby from Akron, Ohio. She thought that soap box racing was a wholesome event for children, and that an event like this would be great for the city that is her home.

Deborah did her homework, researched the race and made a few telephone calls and discovered that a Soap Box Derby race in Moss Point was at least a possibility. A year later, the first race took place in Moss Point.

"The bottom line is the children love it!" Deborah exclaimed. "Anytime you can get them active in doing something that is both an educational or a learning experience that will help them to develop into the kinds of good people we want them to become. Anything that we can do to provide them an outlet is worth the effort. It's worth the time; it's worth the sweat."

Deborah Washington and Loretta Jennings.

Putting on the 1998 event will pose a challenge to the citizens of Moss Point who year after year volunteer to make the event a success. The June 13th race is expected to double the field (eighteen racers in 1997) of participants as last year.

"I don't really feel that that's going to be a challenge because we've had the exposure now, and the word is out," explained Loretta Jennings, one of the original members of the team of planners and organizers who has been with the Magnolia State race since the start. "It has been uphill to this point and the more we grow, the more it will continue to be uphill.

"The community has really come together and has given a helping hand," added Jennings. "With them knowing the potential of the soap box race, I think that they will step up to the plate and help out, if for nothing more than just their interest in the children alone."

"The volunteerism has fostered many friendships," added Washington. "It gives us a common thing to work on. And we all, typically, are concerned about our children and are willing to do somehting positive for our children. And this (Soap Box Derby) is an excellent project."

Washington went on to explain that volunteers from the U.S. Navy were extremely valuable to the success of last year's event. Navy volunteers

handled the movement of race cars freeing other volunteers to handle the many other logistical responsibilities.

"There were more than seventy volunteers needed for just eighteen racers last year," explained Washington. "If we double the number of racers, we are going to need more help this year."

For potential volunteers who have not experienced the Magnolia State Soap Box Derby, Jennings provides a sample of what they might expect: "When we come downtown on that final day, there's a very good sense of togetherness," she explained. "The Soap Box Derby itself is cohesive. That spirit is in the air. Of course, leading up to that, we've developed some friendships because we've had to do lots of things together.

"I think it presents a great opportunity for the city of Moss Point," added Jennings. "I have these grandiose ideas that one day we can become a small Akron where the Soap Box Derby Weekend will have, just as they do in Akron, all kinds of people from all over Alabama, and throughout Mississippi, Northwest Florida and Louisiana. I think we will be a community where all those people will come and there will be excitement about Soap Box Derby."

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It certainly appears that this is indeed the direction the Magnolia State Soap Box Derby is headed. There has been an increase in the number of volunteers. The number of racing participants, which has always been the event's biggest concern, appears to be a problem of the past. And the support of the business community, according to Washington has been outstanding.

"We have come in contact with and had the opportunity to meet with so many leaders and business people in our own community," said Washington. "Sometimes you don't have that opportunity. We have businesses calling to ask what they can do. That's a great position to be in which seems to be totally opposite of other race cities. We don't have problems with the financial aspect. We've always had a problem with getting enough racers to get involved, because we've basically started from ground zero. This is something that the parents haven't grown up with or they haven't seen a lot of."

Corporate sponsorships have allowed for more advertising which Washington believes is key to the overwhelming response this year. By the end of April more than fifty packets

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had been mailed to inquiring potential participant. That number does not include last year participants who meet the age requirements.

Local businesses have been generous in other ways by purchasing cars to represent their businesses and making other donations. Local banks provide monetary prizes for the top three racers. The first place winner gets a $500 savings bond; 2nd place a $300 savings bond and third place a $100 savings bond.

The Magnolia State Soap Box Derby has grown considerably over the past seven years, due to the hard work of Washington and Jennings and the many others who serve on the various committees and volunteer on race day. The support of the community is unquestionable.

Washington said that several other cities in Mississippi have desired to host Soap Box Derby races, but once they realized the amount of "time, energy and effort" that goes into putting on a race, they have backed away from it. "There have been several organizations in different parts of the state and this area that have entertained the idea of putting one on," she explained. "But it requires a substantial amount of time, a serious amount of commitment and of course money, too. But I think the number of volunteers necessary to put one on seems to be the thing that makes them decide one way or another."

Washington and Jennings enjoyed talking about the way the City of Moss Point and its people have rallied behind the Magnolia State Soap Box Derby. They were also proud to discuss a particular story that developed a couple of years ago. It is about the resourcefullness, creativity and perseverance of one young man as he prepared for the event.

Deborah Washington, Loretta Jennings and Sarah McPherson have been involved with the Magnolia State Soap Box Derby from the beginning.

"Every year there is something that moves you to tears," explained Washington. "Two years ago we had a grandmother who called Loretta on the phone to let her know that she had a grandson who had really been working hard for like a week or so, outside

in the back yard under the tree, putting his car together. And his little brother had been helping him. And he was just so excited about racing. And, of course, Loretta had to tell her that you are required to use a kit in order to be able to race. And she had to let her know that he wasn't going to be able to race his car, of course because of insurance reasons and some other things, too. But anyway, he was invited to come on down and bring his car. We treated him as though he was an official racer.

"The car looked great, to be honest. He had taken lawnmower wheels and paneling and painted it. His grandmother was able to come out and see him receive all of that love - I guess you could call it. And of course his grandmother was on an oxygen tank and she did not live long after that."

"He was such a sweet child," said Jennings. "And because of this story, we had another community activist, Donna Banks, who actually wanted to be sure that this child would race in the next race, so she went about gathering funds to make sure that she had enough funds to purchase a kit car for him the following year. Unfortunately, his family had moved away, and he wasn't able to be in the race.

"That was one of the highlights of the race, because that car was there and it was on the scene and it carried newspaper articles about it. It was just a

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neat little car. He had some ideas of his own. He had no diagram or anything. Apparently, he just went out and built himself a car. That was his understanding. Hearing about soap box, he just thought it was a little soap box and you just built a car as you see fit, and then you race it in the race. And of course, that's how some soap box races are held. You build a car; you use your own imagination; and you show up on race day. This one is more regimented than that. All the rules are in place."

Concern for the children is Washington and Jennings reason for spending months preparing for the race each year. Their concern becomes even more apparent when you learn that neither has ever had one of their children to race. Jennings' daughter is a dentist in Moss Point; and Washington's son will be old enough to race in 1999.

"We do it because we care about children," said Washington. "We feel that there is a need to get them involved in wholesome activity. And this is an activity that from start to finish is wholesome."

"You get to see the children develop," explained Jennings. "It's a wholesome, competitive spirit. It's okay to be competitive. Somebody has to win. The object is to do the very best that you can do. That's the kind of attitude that all adults should want to foster in children."

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West Elementary Students Honor Vets

(Photograph and text provided by Jeanie Lunsford, Communications Director, Moss Point Public School District.)

Cherica McBride (front) and Leotha Batiste, fourth-graders at West Elementary in Moss Point, visited the Vietnam War Memorial Wall in Ocean Springs. Teacher Judy Allen has been teaching the students about the Vietnam War and took them to place American flags along "The Wall." The students made rubbings from the engraved names and were moved by finding a familiar name: MIA Walter Joseph Taylor, Jr. from Moss Point. The students' music teacher, Ramona Little, wears a POW/MIA bracelet with Taylor's name on it, so it was familiar to the children. Finding the name of a fallen veteran from their own town helped the students to understand this part of history in a way books and lectures are unable to do.

Alpha Kappa Alpha Chapter Chartered in Gulfport

On February 7, after eleven months of preparation, the Gulf Coast Pearls Interest Group became Upsilon Chi Omega, the second graduate chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc. on the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

Southeastern Regional Director Vanessa R. Long conducted the chartering ceremony, inducting 22 women into the new chapter. Long introduced the new members to the public during a formal ball at the Treasure Bay Hotel in Biloxi.

Immediately following the induction ceremony, Sonya L. Williams was elected president during the chapter's first official meeting.

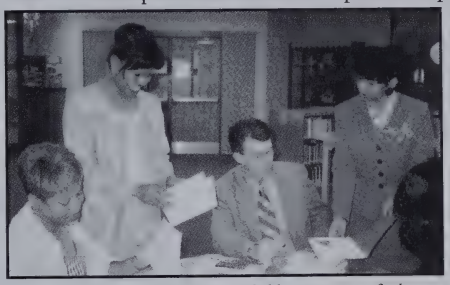
Upsilon Chi Omega was formed to serve communities in the western part of the Mississippi Gulf Coast - from Gulfport to Waveland.

As an interest group, the sorority members took an active role in helping the communities in several ways. They sponsored a lock-in and etiquette workshop for teenage girls, served meals at a homeless shelter, and provided baskets of food and toiletries for local elderly and needy people.

The chapter has adopted two teenagers recently orphaned and it is the goal of the chapter to continue to provide friendship, leadership and financial support for these young people. (Submitted by Sherry L. Rankin, Public Relations Coordinator, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc., Upsilon Chi Omega Chapter.).

Creating Partnerships Between Parents and Teachers

Escatawpa Elementary parent Carol Winters (left to right), Moss Point High School teacher Theresa Lee, Les Hemmings and Sharon Thompson talk about how partnerships between home and school can help dramatically improve a child's educational experience.



Thompson, Moss Point Schools' director of school and family partnerships, invited Hemmings to visit the schools for several days and meet with teachers, parents, and community and business volunteers.

(Photograph and text provided by Jeanie Lunsford, Communications Director, Moss Point Public School District.)

Hemmings is on loan to the U.S. Department of Education from John Hancock Mutual Life Insurance Company and is working with districts throughout the nation to create more effective partnerships between schools, families and local businesses.

In addition to talking with small groups of parents and teachers, Hemmings spoke to school, business and community members at the *Moss Point Schools' Partnership Appreciation Luncheon, Moss Point Rotary Breakfast, and the Moss Point Active Citizens Banquet.*

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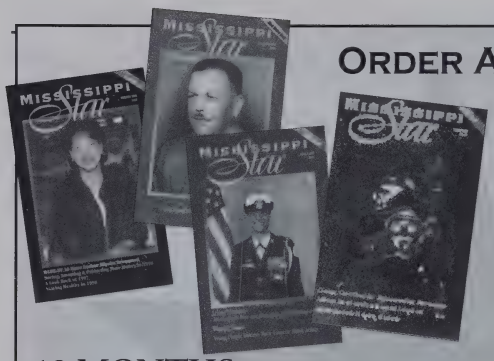

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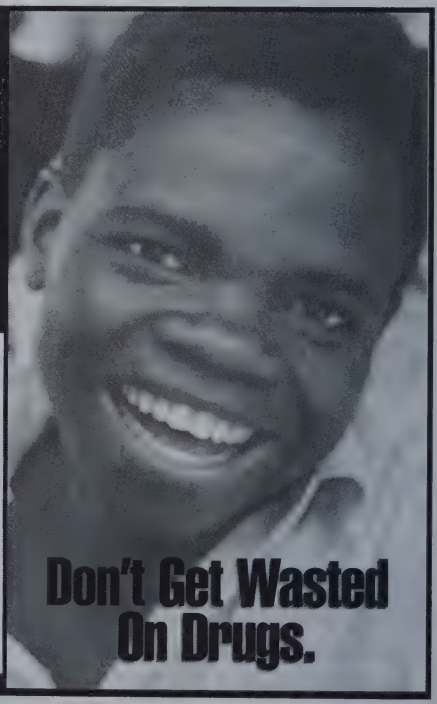

Don't Get Wasted On Drugs.

GUEST WORD

Celebrate Your Journey

by Lucimarian Roberts

One of the many gifts received on my birthday in 1988 was a small red and black striped fabric-covered notebook to be used as a daily journal. Immediately, on the inside cover sheet, I wrote the following quotations found in a favorite book: "Success is building self-estem in yourself and others through service." "Give to the world the best that you have and the best will come back to you., for life is a game of kings and queens. It's not what you say, but do; so, give to the world, the best that you have and the best will come back to you."

The next two or three pages were filled with Bible quotations from Ephesians and Proverbs which were motivational and inspiring words to live by, but they were not written by Lucimarian Roberts. Then, one morning words began to flow and I wrote in my daily journal what I was feeling in my heart at that moment: I am in the autumn of my life! As the leaves on the trees change hues, so my hair, my complexion, and my body are changing! I look into the mirror and the face reflected there is so startling, unlike the face I once knew as mine. I look so much like Mamma and Daddy looked to me. Was it just a few years ago?

As autumn is a beautiful season of the year, the autumn of my life is beautiful.. There stirs within me such a challenge to love and live, to feel more fully God's love and to love Him and my family more. My autumn has now turned into winter. The small red and black fabric covered notebook still has blank pages to be filled. How I wish I had recorded April 17th, 1998.

April 17, 1998 began in an ordinary way...morning prayer and meditational readings, breakfast and the reading of the morning paper's obituary column. To my shock and grief was the name of a friend whom I had not seen in several years, Bernice Beiler.

We had worked closely together on

several political and community programs in Pass Christian. "Miss B", as she was affectionately called by her friends was a fearless worker, particularly when it came to civil rights and senior citizens. Memories of her and Olivia Brown's valiant efforts on behalf of the residents of Camille Village surged over me. The paper stated the funeral would be held in Long Beach at 9:30 a.m. But if I hurried I would be able to make it on time. I arrived a few minutes late, but fortunately the family was still assembled by the entrance doors of St. Thomas Catholic Church and I had the opportunity to embrace the younger daughter I had known so many years ago. I was deeply saddened that there were so few people gathered to say good-bye to such a warrior friend. Then I realized that many of her friends were probably saying hello like Olivia Brown and others who had passed earlier from Pass Christian. They were having a joyous reunion while those of us were mourning our loss. Yet, as mayor Billy McDonald said of "Miss B", she had left a visible legacy of good work in the beautiful Pass Christin Senior Citizen Center. I left the church uplifted that I had the opportunity to experience a wonderful, lasting relationship with a person who had made life better for so many people.

April 17th began with the funeral of a friend but ended in a celebration of life to come. Berniece Beiler was a woman of tall stature and large girth. Merry Green is diminutive in height and weight. One was white, the other is black. But both clearly God's daughters with a purpose to create opportunities to showcase God's wonderful gifts and talents he generously gives us.

Merry Green's production, an Expo for Today's Black Woman in the South, to be presented at the Mississippi Coast Convention Center, Saturday and Sunday, August 28 and 29, 1999 with a preceding gala awards celebration on Friday, August 27, 1999 presents the marvelous opportunity to showcase the talents and expertise of the women living on the Mississippi Gulf Coast to the nation! One of Paul Lawrence Dunbar's poems has a line that says, "Chile, you just had to have been there!". Well I am stealing that line....Chile, you just had to have been there to hear our beautiful ladies introduce themselves April 17, 1998 at the Isle of Capri's coalition of women's initial planning meeting! We are entrepreneurs, attorneys, teachers, nurses, models, journalists, public relations consultants, social workers, beauty consultants, community advocates, children advocates, computer specialists, bank executives, retirees with skills to share!!! We are all hues, shapes, sizes, religions, hairstyles and fashions!! We are all beautiful because we come together as one to share our talents and abilities for a common cause. What an exhilarating experience to write in my red and black fabric covered notebook. *What a portent of things to come!!!!* MS

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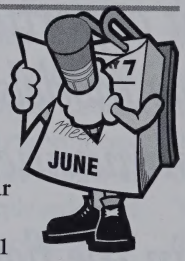

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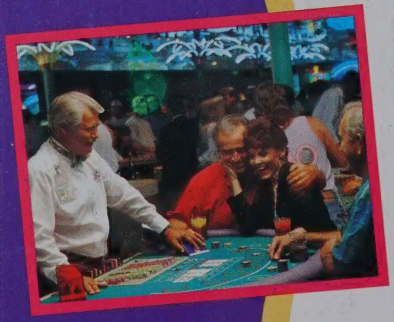

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